Edited by HOWARD SERGEANT

No. 7 (1947)

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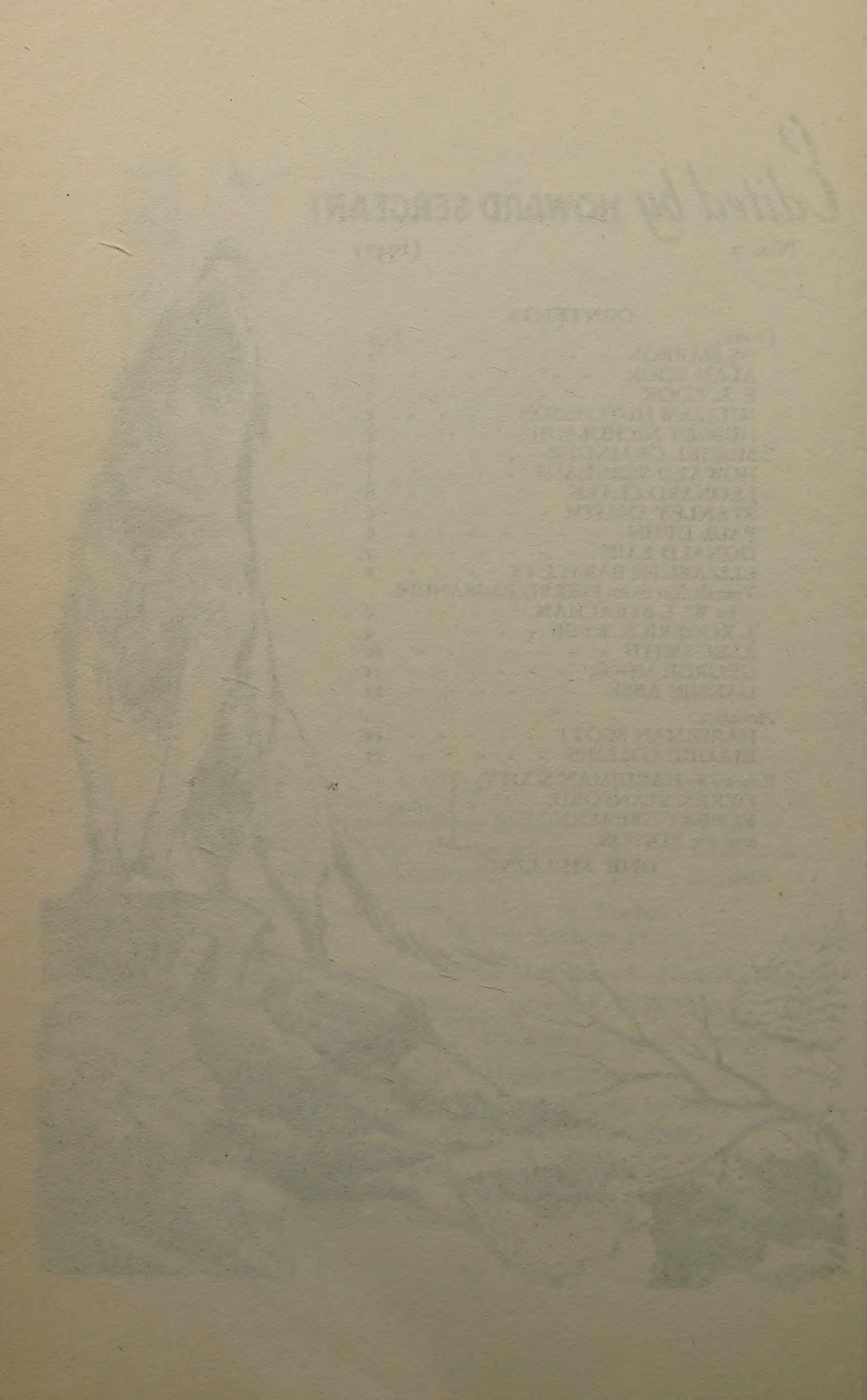
ONE SHILLING



NORTHERN SNOW

Os Marron

IN winter, the season of stars and hidden seed,
I heard the songs of children, a garland along the lanes
rising from the white inverted sky of snow
like birds from a footfall ; the white cross
became the burden of the moors, deeper than grass.

We gathered the roses of furnace fires
from the wet pavement of cloud above the town
after rain had levelled down the leaves,
and in our hearts aglow the strength of love
stronger than the pale fire of stars.
For winter is the back of an old man's hand
the gnarled bark of a tree, harsh to the touch
as a star might be, or in the morning
broken bricks under the skin of frost.
Remembering how soft the palm of summer
we turned hands to the fire as to a god.

Cotton is nearest to snow in the mill
where the weather is one season, always a tropic,
a slow hot wind to break the yellow brows
to a sweat of rain ; every worker singing
is one who dreams of summer, every dream
into the dull thread weaves a bright flower,
answers the machine with music ;
and men
coming out of the pit under the stars
take the wind on their shoulders, a bundle of knives
to the darkened town, empty as a chapel,
and those still awake could see them kneel
down in the snow, like negroes in cotton,
praying for a vision out of a silent heaven.
But these were given no song, no tongue,
their sons will not succeed them.

Snow and the sky contain the world
in a hollow bell the two seas pull,
the moon fingers the broken spines, the Pennines,
trails silk along the stony lanes ;

the towns are held in a bony hand
like broken coal, full of hidden fire
the flowers by night or day of dreams,
the magic sleeping mouths of children,
windows of fantasy in a forest of frost.

The cold lies long in the hill, longer
in the stone and not for ever in the heart.
Stars are faraway and therefore beautiful ;
under the hill the mouths are full of seed
and every pick plucks out music in the darkness,
every heart is a bird in a cage of bone
swinging in the dark, black as the mask of swans.
Over the sheen of frozen pools and silver flashes,
slivers of the moon, the frosted tube of night
blows hollow on the hills,
from the low Northern sky
wing by wing the lost birds are falling,
are taken into the shallow hills like rain,
and become a hive of singers, promising summer,
spinning stars into the darkness, the words
white as childhood, snow concealing flowers.

MUSIC

ALAN ROOK

MIGRATORY across the ocean darkness
without content or starlight pity moves :
over our blood-swept continents the careless
hound of hatred pitiless pursues.

Seasonal in the blood-shell of our blindness,
more than in print or in a poet's staves,
stumbles the flicker of new life to oneness
out of a million rocks and coves and caves.

We are not pitiable, nor seeking pity.
Grief bears no sanction to life that starts
peremptory from the ocean to unweave

the tumbled naked tangle of our ditty,
our notes' confusion, part and counterpart,
chaos of minim, quaver, semibreve.

DEATH ENDS DESIRE

R. L. Cook

DEATH ends desire;
The dying bone
Shrinks from the padded crutch,
And withering flesh
Shivers before
The flowering flesh's touch.

But O I touch
The petals in
The forest of your hair
And never know
How soon I'll reach
The skull that's hidden there.

STONEHENGE

William Hutcheson

PROSAIC lies the Plain, and unalluring,
merely a glebe to Stonehenge Ring assigned;
that masterpiece half-ruined, half-enduring,
on Babylon aligned.
Grand, as a great simplicity conceived it,
the ancient ruin holds the soul and eye;
what creed stood here that multitudes received it,
to ultimately die?

What richer altar than a transom leaning
athwart the dolmen did invaders find
ere they set up with art and inner meaning
the classic of its kind?
The mighty trilithons in Wiltshire winters
have smoothed their flanks and toned their sombre greys;
the rains have been their sacramental vintners
on later Easter days.

No organ music thunders through the quiet,
no chanted evensong from high-priest falls;
no painted angels stand in silent diet
in glass-filled astragals.

Song rosaries have since the dawn been pendent,
all rippling pearls, heard but invisible,
as skylark choristers in the ascendent
sang high across the hill.

No creed remains which changed to suit the fashion,
no secret chamber for a god blood-bought;
no relics, trophies raped in ancient passion,
are to this altar brought.
Three thousand years ago, through corn and barley
roved here the master-mason and his kind
from Rollstone, Milston, Appleshaw and Quarley,
and left no name behind.

WINDOWS SEEN FROM A TRAIN

HUBERT NICHOLSON

THROUGH the still and the moving barriers of glass
I leap with the eye into the lives I pass,
Immodestly wanting to be with, even to be,
The lamplit somnambulists, the white company.

Yet to them, I suppose, this dry electric train
Is only the whine of a wire drawn in the brain,
And the woman, head on arm, spreading her hair
Wearily on the table, cannot care,

Nor the sleepless child at the window, asking unheard
For the way out of the room, the flight of the bird:
Yet under the floorboards of the heart I seem to see,
Against all reason, they need and must long for me.

ONCE UPON A TIME

MURIEL GRAINGER

THE angel was immediate, in our innocence,
And fed us with celestial manna, secretly,
So that we grew a little like him, and in trance
Remembered how reluctant our nativity.

Seen from within his wings' wide arc, our pigmy world
Was folded in by friendliness ; the stooping sky
Was franked by rainbows everlastingly unfurled.
Ours was the seven-sided sight of his bright eye.

But now this level landscape with the verge near-set
Has no dimension which could hold him captive here,
Nor shall we recollect him—we so soon forget—
Though he might leave a clue : a feather—or a tear.

LAMENT FOR A WISE HEAD

HOWARD SERGEANT

YOU'RE mixing your drinks, said liver to lover,
and wine of the heart is bane to the head.
Follow your impulse, said river to rover,
but exploit all the wealth of your watershed.
Exploit all the wealth—advised the wise head.

Your faith is my fortune, said drummer to dreamer,
the skin of the saint makes a firm drumhead.
Though you revel in darkness, said scholar to schemer,
the light of the mind will unravel your thread.
The mind will unravel—murmured the wise head.

What's next on the menu ? said diner to donor,
—the poor will ensure you the heavenly bread.
You name my transgressions, said sinner to stoner,
but know you the monster that moves in *your* bed ?
Know you the monster ?—pursued the wise head.

The Lord is my surety, said pauper to piper,
for the signature-tune of the quick and the dead.
You cannot escape me, said leper to leaper,
though you caper with stars the devil's in tread.
The devil's in tread—affirmed the wise head.

He's much too importunate, said helmsman to headsman,
for the health of society—off with the wise head !

ECCE MORS

LEONARD CLARK

ONE night when through the troubled air
The full moon shone
From out of broken clouds,
I saw Death in his valley.
Stalking through wastes of blackened corn
He plucked each lifeless ear
And rubbed to powder every grain
Between his gritty fingers, while
He moved from field to field.
Then up a hill he strode
Into the darkness of a wood;
And when a cock had three times crowed
I saw Death stumble forth
Crowned with a wreath of plaited thorn,
Carrying a cross.

ASTRONOMY

STANLEY SNAITH

WHEN have we ever set our course
Save by the lights of pride
And guttering gods of force?
And, one might ask, where are we now?
Orion with his sword at side,
Jupiter of the doom-hung brow,
Take so much loyalty from the earth,
That it will do no hurt
If one at least should court
For what their patronage is worth
The Lamb, the Plough.

SUPREME COMMANDER'S SONG

PAUL DEHN

WHEN the fog is thicker than bath-water,
Alone on the quay sit I
And a sun the colour of Lifebuoy soap
Goes sliding down the sky.

Under my fingers, floating,
The flat boats jostle and crush,
Whose men on deck stand stiff and still
As bristles in a brush.

So must I heave the anchor-chain
And watch a country's pride
Swirl softly to eternity
Upon the ebbing tide.

LULLABY FOR VIRGINIA

DONALD BAIN

SMILE, my daughter, in your sleep
Curled and naked, like a mouse
Gentle in your palanquin—
Search the willows of the deep
Dream chasms of the house
Where Elephants may amble in—
Fly the arrogant, remote
Elusiveness of everyday,
And watch your amulet of gold
Glitter in the swanlit moat.
For even you must find the way
Of living dreams before they're old;
Gold will teach you how to fly
Down bannisters and castle walls,
The Elephant will tell you how
To know your private Witch and why
The waterfall she lives in falls
Between the snowdrift and the snow;
The swan will carry you beyond
The prairies of your placid park
To realms of red Cornelian.
Over the ripples of the pond
Ride the airways of the dark
And grasp your firm illusion.
Waking then if you should weep
Remember that this guardian house
Will shield you from the strongest Djinn—
Smile, my daughter, in your sleep
Curled and naked, like a mouse
Gentle in your palanquin.

BEFORE MEETING

ELIZABETH BARTLETT

AGAIN, again, the tinny convent bell implores,
The idle leaf fidgets in the cold courtyard,
A nun empties the sodden tea-leaves
Under the purple-plumed lilac;
And outside, children spin dice on the pavement
With the salesman from Chicago.

Domine non sum dignus,
And the maiden candles
Flutter and dribble their flesh
On scarlet and threaded gold
And the tasselled cloth;
The hectic-cheeked madonna
Stiffly cradles our plaster child;
And the Irish navvy
Spits his way
Through the delicate litanies.

But I have a chanting and prayer,
I offer up my invocations
Under his great glad archway,
I shall become my own white lovely dice
Under the hard hands
Of the crouching figure
From Chicago.

TO FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

Translated from the French of
PIERRE EMMANUEL by W. J. STRACHAN

COLUMN supporting the abyss! O shaft of glory
now split from your brittle night and stripped
of your bark even to the top—O memory
too naked for this murky morn when fate
in smoke of horror thickened on the tombs—
you are white, your cry more shrill than steel
you sound for the hills alone in the sombre blue,
you are the eternal lance in the heart of time,

the ear of corn which bursts through Death, awakes
the word close-clenched between the teeth of the dead ;
millions of swords stabbing the sea like blades,
cleaving the tuneless storm of bells, shattering
the sordid mirrors where the tyrants drink,
lashing with foam the white cathedral flanks
whose lowered horns are goring out great furrows
of love, where the banner drips ! where blood wells.
The lark at sunrise dived down to the earth
to greet the dawn of the dead and crying root
the Tree sharpened in the wound which was the O
of Origin and Omega—the Word and empty
mouth delivered to the sad winds of dullness—
You may die : already the birds are hushed
already bleeds the abyss and space is lost
already Christ spills his Blood of future time
noble cypress ! turned seven times in the wound.
(They are shooting you even now in your waste lands
Granada is offered before you a prey to the worms
already the memory is hollowed out behind
the cross already planted, sung and saved
your soul ! You stand soulless alone with God
your soul bespattering the white wall of dawn.)

From *Jour de Colère*
by permission of PIERRE EMMANUEL.

THE CHANGE

J. RODERICK WEBB

WHAT marks the years gone by,
the months lost to the house and office stool ?
Only remembered faces seen more clearly now,
their subtle alterations mirroring the change.
And here a death, and there a landmark gone.

The apples on the tree grow ripe. Season
on season, symbols each for certain movements,
life that ebbs into the summer garden, flows
back again at winter's first caress
and turns against the faces it now robs.

The stranger coming to the town,
its history picked from newspapers, not lips—
coming with no preliminary
speech, friendship, hidden dreams, or hint
of that the darker side in everyone.

The parchment opening to reveal old names,
as lightly as the shadowed lane explored,
a sense of living ancient as the trees,
to their leaves rising children's speech
in the school, beside the graveyard, cool with grass.

And in the patterns of the town
the seeds are set, and growing for the change.
With each pillared individual
the urge to goodness and the urge to faith ;
within the walls of every house

the urge to darkness, the approach to death.
In every heart, the conflict running fast.
In every house come to one blaze at last,
and all a town, and all a country turn,
out of the darkness into light.

ABEL

ALEC SMITH

MORNING is heralded by flowers of blood
Where the torn, quivering muscles lie,
And sharp unconscious spasms pierce the flood
Of dawn with spikes of untold agony.
Until before our eyes a glowing brand
Consumes the wide horizons of the myth,
And silent at the edge of time we stand,
Our hearts stripped clean of the too-formal wreath.

Now eyes pursue the contour of the dream
From the white haunches naked as a thought
To the pierced breast where flows an endless stream.
O source of old remorse and voiceless cries,
Whose mirror with the unrelenting skies
Of our black guilt for evermore is fraught.

THE MINUET
(dix huitieme)

GEORGE MOOR

TOUCHED in the midnight by a sinking hand,
The music-box begins a rare dead dance
That haunts the sleeper's dream. The music's wand
Crosstimes him to the ballroom of old France.

There, deep in a luxurious reverie,
Rousseau lies shut-eyed on the mossy ground.
He's meditating how this world may be
That-better-than-the-real-world he has found.

Rare rascal! how he stood up for his dreams!
While Voltaire, polishing his dingy sight,
Portrays (but shares) a world that to him seems
A place where cultured animal-men fight.

Under the flame-domed chandeliers dance
The eternal dancers—in a minuet.
They hear the chiming as the floods advance—
And lift their skirts, in case they should get wet.

I SHALL ACCEPT NO POET'S DREAM

DANNIE ABSE

I shall accept no poet's dream of darkness
nor exchange my thought of colour,
for I have kissed the God within my friends,
and I have touched my lover.

It would be easy to pine for the home of death,
become a martyr, and demand a Cross,
but I, who can hold the moon within my hands
would find death no compensation for my loss.

Therefore I shall wink no gloomy bells for me,
I am no flower to be pressed within a book;
whilst I breathe, I shall breathe the golden sun
and steal the music-minutes from the clock.

FROM DEATH TO ENTRANCE

HARDIMAN SCOTT

IF Dylan Thomas is one of the greatest of contemporary poets, it is, perhaps, because he penetrates to the enduring conflicts common to all men, which are inherent in the very rhythms of the cosmos itself, and strives to resolve and distil them through the crucible of intense imaginative experience, which issues in a vital and living language, approximating in some degree to the rhythms themselves.

I believe this is what his latest book* shows us more clearly than any of his previous work. But this strength is also Thomas's weakness, for, not surprisingly, it can still result in some unfortunate obscurities, so that the poetry is not always (to quote Hazlitt) " the most emphatical language than can be found for those creations of the mind ' which ecstasy is very cunning in '."

In order to achieve a valuation of the wholeness of poetry, I want always to know to what extent the poet has successfully achieved what he set out to achieve, and technically, if he has used the best possible means to do so. Is the subject of the poem transformed and re-created through the poet's own personal experience, or is it merely second-hand, and is the form he has chosen the one best fitted, and does it evolve naturally from the necessities of the material ? If the purpose of the poet does not emerge clearly, then it is obvious that a whole judgment of this kind cannot be achieved. It is just because so many purposes are indistinct that so much modern criticism is concerned only with various aspects of a poet's work.

My opening sentence does suggest that in the corpus of this book Thomas's intention definitely emerges. It fails only in individual poems, and there one can rightfully accuse him of obscurity and even of pretentiousness.

Now Thomas himself has said that " Poetry is the rhythmic, inevitably narrative, movement from an overclothed blindness to a naked vision . . " We can expect, therefore, much of his poetry to be autobiographical. And in this lies a clue to his greatness, for he uses the autobiographical material of spiritual and emotional experience, and early memories, through which to re-interpret the basic conflicts and dualism in nature itself. His earlier work has familiarised us with his dynamic, sexually creative view of the cosmos and the influence upon this of the Bible both in the provision of a suitable mythology and of language and rhythm, and this is even more apparent in *Deaths and Entrances*. It is particularly evident in the poem, *Unluckily for a Death*, where the dynamic power of sex, the dualism of death and

rebirth and of the active and passive elements of mortal desire and desire for the life of the spirit, all emerge strongly and strive towards resolution. But he knows that neither aspect of this dualism can be successful of itself; both must evolve through a natural and creative sex relationship :-

> " . . . the phoenix' bid for heaven and the desire after
> Death in the carved nunnery
> Both shall fail if I bow not to your blessing
> Nor walk in the cool of your mortal garden
> With immortality at my side like Christ the sky."

And later :-

> " . . . O my true love, hold me.
> In your every inch and glance is the globe of
> genesis spun,
> And the living earth your sons."

Everything depends on this proper significance of sex. " Sex," as Lawrence says in *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, " goes through the rhythm of the year in man and woman, ceaselessly changing : the rhythm of the sun in his relation to the earth. Oh, what a catastrophe for man when he cut himself off from the rhythm of the year . . . what a maiming of love when it was made a personal, merely personal feeling." This essential rhythm is intrinsic in Thomas's poetry, and the verbal influence of the Bible (and of his native tradition as well) carries forward its creation with a rich and convincing vitality.

A Winter's Tale, full of Biblical referents, is almost a prayer in itself, a prayer for the imperative love, not an ascetic love with ichor in its veins; and within this love Thomas does strive for some resolution, one might almost say for death and transcendence within the vitality of love :-

> " And through the thighs of the engulfing bride.
> The woman breasted and the heaven headed
>
> Bird, he was brought low,
> Burning in the bride bed of love, in the whirl-
> Pool at the wanting centre, in the folds
> Of paradise, in the spun bud of the world.
> And she rose with him flowering in her melting snow."

But his awareness of sin is not lessened at all. He shares with Donne the conflict of a vigorously sensuous perception with the knowledge

of sin. Thomas accepts the Fall. In *Ceremony after a Fire Raid*, which is compounded largely of Old Testament legend used to give significance to a child's death (to emphasise the necessity of its growing through our own hearts), even the child is not exempt from the Fall :- " I know the legend/Of Adam and Eve is never for a second/Silent in my service/Over the dead infants . . . " Yet within it, is the very prerequisite of rebirth ; and in form, the whole thing is ritualistic and compelling, almost a chant. In fact, throughout the poems that mingle the war into their themes, is the suggestion that this great death is the prelude to another birth ; it is not surprising that his conception of nature should have led him to this view. *This Side of the Truth* is another expression of a similar dualism.

Nearly always he is writing wholly out of his own experience, so that mostly the poetry itself advances his purpose in the best possible manner. But it is in poems like *Vision and Prayer*, *Poem in October* and *Fern Hill* that he attains his most consummate expression. The first, a sort of Christ-personal Calvary, sees the poet entering into his own death, for he knows he must go back to birth again, and through his spiritual experience he achieves some enlightenment. *Poem in October* has a wonderful vigour and singing quality, with rich imagery (such as the above quotations do not adequately convey) but it is always clear, and plangently recaptures his childhood and his feeling of oneness with all living nature, and, like *Fern Hill*, its sound alone is sheer joy. And these poems, too, show how Thomas, while not using the common language of speech, yet, with the strengthening influence of the Bible and his own tongue, does use the natural rhythms of speech, although why he doesn't make the sensible compromise of using a hyphen when his telling epithets, like " heron priested shore " and " net webbed wall," clearly calls for it, I just can't imagine. But these poems have all his great characteristics—his vivid similes and imagery, and his individual music, and above all they fulfil the implications of the first paragraph of these notes, and are part of " the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself."

* *Deaths and Entrances* (Dent 3/6d.)

IMAGERY AND THE POET

ELLODE COLLINS

IMAGERY is contact, the point where a writer draws closest to his audience. Rhythm and metre might be compared to tide and wave; imagery to an iceberg, the crystallisation of the element, riding partly submerged, partly revealed in the water. It produces its effect on two levels, the subconscious, where it is merged into the feeling and structure of a poem, and the conscious, where its value is mainly associative and evocative. It has become, in the hands of modern poets, a thing of great precision, yet elasticity, intensely personal, sometimes esoteric.

Poets developing their style and power seem to slowly discard one type of imagery for another. The earlier poems of Edith Sitwell are highly individualistic, the imagery is brilliant, bizarre and vivid. I know of no other poet who can bring such an illusion of colour into the mind. There is a balletesque, limelight glare which pours over her subject throwing into relief the surrounding shadows. In her later work the imagery seems to come into the poem obliquely from all sides. Here is no deliberate building up, but rather a constant shifting and crossing of images. This method, which she has now brought to an advanced state of subtlety, allows a sliding rule of values and symbols, the images are constantly changing place, being presented first as one thing then as another. *Anne Boleyn's Song* is full of this shimmer and flux, the images mingle, cross-current, separate and reform. All Edith Sitwell's imagery is an evolution, it is of one root ; the individual poems develop their symbols one from another, therefore the emotions are carried forward and enriched by what has gone before, and the whole body of poetry becomes one, as Shakespeare's sonnets do.

In the work of Dylan Thomas the apparently unconnected symbols and images fuse into coherence by the sheer force of his emotional drive. Unless you are prepared to be caught up and carried by them, they will ride you down. They make their impression by impact rather than poetic reason. The force and lyrical power is magnificent and he comes nearer than any poet living to expressing the inexpressible. There is an undercurrent of fable and allegory in his work, a kind of universal movement. *A Winter's Tale* has a weird, ballad-like atmosphere ; there is nothing thin or sterile in anything he writes, yet the force is always governed and the image makes its mark.

T. S. Eliot uses images in a cerebralized form, they rarely appeal to the senses, but rather to the intellect. They are symbols of abstract

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thought, rather than those of emotion. What emotion there is has a devitalised, negative quality. In a lesser poet this might have seemed very like a whine, but if the breadth and depth of his despair, the sense of utter voidness and negation, and the undertone of religious feeling, lift Eliot far above the ' Bones and Stones ' school. His images rise through a nihilistic sea, crystallizing in death, space, water, flame, the seasons and the rose. Sometimes the poems are like huge shadowy processions, without beginning or end, then they break, the imagery is expanded from a central thought, as in *East Coker IV*, where the figure of Christ as the wounded surgeon who ministers to a dying world is evoked by the use of medical symbols. Eliot has a wide imagist vocabulary, his poetry, in conception, appears to generate still more symbols, rather than pour itself into his preconceived forms of expression, though some of the images are recurrent.

The younger poets appear on the whole to favour the strange, the violent and the esoteric in their imagery. Sometimes this results in work of uncommon beauty, on the other hand it often leads to utter chaos, a kind of jumble-sale cum Belsen effect. The difficulty of finding symbols of sufficient newness and originality is obvious. The impulse may be genuine though the subject is one that is much over-written. Between these poles the writer must discover means of expression that are iconoclastic in result though creative in purpose. A kind of poetic metabolism is set up ; the image destroys and it creates.

REVIEWS

Adam & Eve & Us : Hardiman Scott (Sylvan Press, 8s. 6d.)

Within the Thunder : Hugo Dewar (Porcupine Press, 3s. 6d.)

Swanhild : Joseph Braddock (Chaterson Ltd., 5s. od.)

ALTHOUGH the blurb of this first volume of poems by Mr. Hardiman Scott announces that he is principally " occupied with metaphysical themes .... but his imagery shows a keen perception of nature, and occasionally results in a nature poem," this description dismisses too lightly what seems to me to be a major element in his work. For Mr. Scott is essentially a nature poet. It is the warmth and richness of his imagery, his remarkable facility in capturing natural sights and sounds—' the sun's quick-silver/Turn on leaf and the dirk-drawn breath of water '—which distinguishes his work from the cold and brittle cerebralism of contemporary metaphysicals. Whilst it is true that he is concerned with metaphysical problems and has been greatly

influenced by Eastern thought, he reaches his highest stature as a poet when he combines philosophy with nature. *The Field*, *Movement in Amber*, and *Silver Birches* are but a few examples. Where this combination is lacking, the poems are far from convincing.

He faces contemporary problems without superficiality or violent bitterness, as in *Crucifixion* and *Elegy for the Greeks*, attempting always ' to show the colour of the root, more pale/in the petals' expressive splendour.' His poem *On Reading of Belsen* is on a theme that a sensitive poet might avoid ; yet he controls thought and emotion with such craftsmanship as to make it one of the most moving in the book.

There is nothing metaphysical about Mr. Hugo Dewar. Nor does he draw his inspiration from nature. In this collection there is both bitterness and indignation, and he hurls this thunderbolts at the statesman (' diplomat with the poisoned pen '), the general (' be-medalled murd'rer'), the priest (' hypocrite with honeyed speech ') and the bureaucrats ' with souls like a shrivelled apple.' Whatever the merits or demerits of this volume, its author feels for the common man and speaks from his heart.

But sincerity and social idealism alone do not necessarily constitute good poetry, and it is to be regretted that Mr. Dewar has neither assimilated his material nor exercised much discipline over his emotions. He is too easily persuaded to see life in terms of black and white. This is unfortunate because there are a few poems like *Marked and Unmarked Graves* which almost redeem the book.

Many of our poets have turned their attention to drama but, owing to a lack of appreciation that this medium of expression requires special knowledge and technique, few verse-plays convenient for stage-production have been written. Mr. Joseph Braddock, who is both a scholar and a poet, has succeeded where others have failed, and his *Swanhild* not only makes interesting reading, but is also suitable for presentation on the stage. Although the play is based upon William Morris's translation of the Volsunga Saga, the author handles his material with originality and skill, and his dignified (at times, majestic) verse creates an effectively northern atmosphere for the tragic Viking love story of Randwer and Swanhild.

HOWARD SERGEANT

The Voyage and other Poems : Edwin Muir (Faber, 6s. od.)
Talking Bronco : Roy Campbell (Faber, 7s. 6d.)

WHILE Mr. Muir writes : " The heart in its stations/Has need of patience," Mr. Campbell snaps " With teeth, like bullets fastened

in their clips,/To chew the thunder and to spit the pips,/Ejecting from the breech, in perfect time,/The shells of meter and the shucks of rhyme, yet drive the thoughts with perforating aim/Like tracer-bullets on their threads of flame". Yet both can write with a withering penetration of their own failings. Thus, Mr. Muir :-

> " When in revulsion I detest myself
> Thus heartily, myself with myself appal,
> And in this mortal rubbish delve and delve.
> A dustman damned—"

And Mr. Campbell :-

> " Of many selves that meet in me
> The meanest has the most persisted,
> The one that joined the A.R.P.
> When half humanity enlisted."

If this much they share, for the rest they are contrast, and the quotations above give a fair idea of the quality of the verse.

About Mr. Campbell's poetry there is a fierce physical quality that literally forces the reader into the poet's own feeling. It shocks and bludgeons the reader into awareness ; from its vividness there is no escape. By comparison it makes Mr. Muir's poems seem like exquisite Oriental paintings, delicate and sensitive in line. But this, of course, is no disparagement, for like the Sumiye painters who worked in a medium that necessitated a line swiftly and deftly drawn to achieve the right effect the first time, Mr. Muir, with delicate and with fine perception, draws a deft and accurate line first time, so that his poems are lovely pieces of workmanship. It is the poetry of scholarly and sage detachment, detachment but not disinterestedness, for it would be wrong to imply that there is no emotional quality in Mr. Muir's poems ; they are not just polished crystal. There is a deep emotive force in them all, for with imaginative sympathy he draws the experiences of others into himself, and then in his philosophic detachment learns their real significance. His poetry is, indeed, emotion recollected in tranquility, and then does he write with deep insight and understanding. And while, philosophically, he accepts evil, he faces it with courage and determination and a simple and a refreshing faith in the Christian Virtues. He is a rare poet of fine perceptive powers, and above all, a consummate craftsman.

Mr. Campbell is a craftsman, too, although sometimes the regularity of his rhymes are inclined to jingle. He is always fierce, and when he succeeds, his satire is certainly the best of any contemporary

verse. But too often the satire is spoilt by an exuberant bitterness, and when he is most bitter he is guilty of dangerous over-simplification. Poets particularly are snapped at with venom. He doesn't pull his punches, and often they hit hard and in the right spot. And yet, Mr. Campbell can write pure and moving lyrics like *San Juan de la Cruz*, and his *Washing Day* is a destined anthology piece. The Hamlet-like soliloquy of *The Skull in the Desert* and the translation from St. John of the Cross reveal Mr. Campbell at his most powerful, but before his greatness becomes even more apparent his heart "has need of patience."

HARDIMAN SCOTT

The Dark Thorn: Wrey Gardiner (Grey Walls Press, 7s. 6d.)

LIKE Mr. Gardiner's previous two volumes of autobiographical writing, *The Dark Thorn* is no straight life-story but a literary experiment in self-confession. Briefly, one might describe this book as an inner monologue in diary form, the psychological record of a year in the life of a poet, an uncensored night-book of the largely hidden self. "There is," he writes, "no careful construction of a creaking point of view here. Nothing but my own fountain, the pure stream of what I am thinking now."

So, in his welling torrents of prose, unhindered by the weirs of revision ("I will not write my paragraphs half-a-dozen times"), the author tells us of his friends, male and female, his work as a publisher, his wishes as a poet, his thoughts on love and politics and art. All this takes place against a background of bombs on London and Soho pubs: Montaigne, say, as a neo-Romantic, influenced by Joyce and the stream-of-Time.

DEREK STANFORD

Writers of Tomorrow No. 4 edited by Peter Ratazzi (Clark's Publications, 1s. 6d.)

THIS publication continues into civilian life a venture of Mr. Peter Ratazzi who, during the war years, brought out *Khaki and Blue* to which most of the Forces' writers contributed. His chief aim is to achieve a synthesis of social and literary writing and, in particular, to draw together non-commercialised talents: and in this aim Mr. Ratazzi attains a considerable measure of success. In brief, *Writers of Tomorrow* is a cross section of what is being written in England at the present time, mostly by writers not yet established. This is the kind of periodical publication that will interest those who study new trends.

ROBERT GREACEN

NOTICES

FLEET POETRY

CONTRIBUTIONS are invited for an anthology of poetry by men and women now serving in or who have served in the Navy (including W.R.N.S., Q.A.R.N.N.S., V.A.D., and Admiralty Civilians), or the Merchant Navy. This anthology is being compiled by the Editor of the *Fleet Poetry Broadsheet* who requires more poetry of any sort and on any subject (but not humorous verse). Contributions should be sent to: The Editor, Fleet Poetry, 12 Plewlands Gardens, Edinburgh, 10; either in typescript or legible handwriting, and the full name, rank or rating, naval address (if any) and home address of the author should accompany each submission. A stamped addressed envelope for the return of unsuitable work should also be sent.

SONNETS

MARGARET Crosland is preparing a collection of contemporary sonnets and invites contributions, which should be sent to her: 6 Halley House, 46 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1.

MUSIC AND POETRY

GATHERINGS will be held on the third Monday of every month until 19th May at the Ethical Church Hall, Queensway, Bayswater, London. Tea 6-15 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. For programmes apply: Alec Craig, 140 Holland Road, London, W.14.

CROSS-SECTION 1947

A volume of poems, stories, essays, and criticism, edited by Howard Sergeant and Peter Ratazzi, will be published early this year by Pendulum Publications Ltd. Intending purchasers are advised to order in advance from their booksellers.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

POEMS, short stories, articles, etc. for various collections and anthologies in preparation. Good original work of all kinds will be considered. Manuscripts, which should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be submitted to The Editor, 59 Orchard Avenue, Squires Gate, Blackpool.